Draft Meeting Report
GCCG Annual Retreat
23-24 November 2021
Chavannes-de-Bogis, Switzerland

Introduction and opening remarks:
The GCCG Chair welcomed the participants and introduced the agenda.

Review of GCCG's role in 2021 and GCCG Priorities for 2022
The opening session was co-led by the GCCG Chair, Ms. Marina Skuric-Prodanovic and the CCCM (IOM) Co-Coordinator, Ms. Wan Sophonpanich. The session involved an ice-breaker quiz for participants on the GCCG workplan. Participants reviewed areas of accomplishment as well as planned activities which were not completed, drawing on some lessons learned for the 2022 workplan. The overall conclusion was that the group was successful at putting greater focus on support to field operations and adapting to the new operating environment due to COVID-19, but that further progress could be made in this area. It also concluded that in planning for 2022, it should focus on fewer activities and objectives.

Global Cluster 2022 Priorities
Over a series of three sessions facilitated by Ms. Naouar Labidi (GFSC), Ms, Jim Robinson (HLP AoR) and Ms. Randa Hassan (GCCG-S), GCCs shared their priority work areas and goals for 2022. Following presentations by individual clusters, the concluding session highlighted the areas of work for 2022 that were common to most GCCs: (i) support to country operations, including ensuring sufficient capacity and adherence to minimum standards; (ii) localization and accountability to affected people; and, (iii) advocacy with the IASC, CLAs and donors.

In the ensuing discussion relating to the shared priority areas participants suggested quarterly meetings with donors and CLAs; sharing the background note to the ERC with a wider group, including donors; sending a summary of the coordination mapping to donors in early 2022, with particular focus on the lack of IM capacity; defining and carrying out collective outreach to CLAs; and, inviting the EDG Chair to the periodic GCCG meetings and the next GCCG retreat. Discussions also highlighted the importance of "greening" operational support in light of climate change and the lack of explicit reference to cash given its integration into programming. Participants also discussed the need for a central repository of all Global Cluster strategies and to develop a common, collective outcome for inclusion in all Global Cluster strategies. A suggestion from one participant was to work towards the harmonization of the timeframe for GC strategies to allow the possibility for a truly inter-cluster approach.

Coordination Challenges and Opportunities 1: Getting the right people with the right skills at the right time
Session outcome(s):
  ➢ Advocate with the ERC/OPAG to encourage consistent investment in cluster coordination functions and an IASC policy or benchmarks on minimum cluster staffing.
  ➢ Approach UNICEF/WHO to brief Principals/Directors on ther HR initiatives to help take forward this issue.
  ➢ Setting up a GCCG learning task force on competency frameworks and developing a module on ICC.
  ➢ Conduct joint advocacy on HR issues

Ms. Anna Ziolkovska (GNC) presented UNICEF's findings on its Country Cluster HR Analysis and the phased approach to ensure dedicated capacity for all activated clusters. This was complemented an overview of UNICEF's new capacity development initiative for coordinators, IMOs as well as CLA staff. The presentation highlighted the new e-learning platform for coordinators and IMOs containing both technical modules specific to nutrition as well as generic modules that can be used by all clusters, currently being translated into French, Spanish and Arabic.

Ms. Ziolkovska highlighted the positive shift in management's perception towards a greater appreciation for the coordination role, the intention to increase the number of cluster positions using UNICEF staff, as well as

increasing the seniority level of cluster coordinators in major crises. There is a commitment to ensure dedicated cluster teams (coordinator + IMO) and a career path for coordinators. Adding cluster performance to country office leadership assessments was also seen as an important development. This is complemented by a move to finance global cluster leadership using core UNICEF funding, and staffing cluster coordinator positions with UNICEF personnel. An investment in cluster coordinators and national co-leads will be made through a pool of coordinators or by ensuring that programme and emergency staff are trained to cover cluster functions.

The discussion in plenary covered the importance of advocacy highlighting the cost of not having adequate coordination staff. The GCCG considered how the group can engage donors at a senior level in the future e.g. by presenting the outcome of the annual coordination mapping (as was done in previous years) to highlight gap areas as well as progress around staffing or other issues, and to engage on broader coordination related thematics. Specifically on staffing issues, the group considered whether UNICEF and (as well as WHO who have implemented a similar approach) could be a pull factor among CLAs in encouraging attention to issues such as staffing, skills development and greater recognition of the coordination role.

Coordination Challenges and Opportunities 2: Working in non-IASC Cluster Activated Countries
Session outcome(s):
  ➢ Clarify sector/cluster terminology
  ➢ Map different approaches of GC towards sectors/clusters, including core functions, and accountabilities of CLAs and GCs in sector contexts
  ➢ Address misconceptions of use of cluster approach

This was a brainstorming session facilitated by Ms. Athalie Mayo (GLC), Ms. Jennifer Chase (GBV AoR) with support from Ms. Randa Hassan (GCCG-Secretariat) to exchange views and practices across clusters on how to resource and support sectoral coordination/non-activated clusters. Following a short overview of the issue including the role of OCHA Regional Offices in supporting coordination in non-cluster activated countries, participants worked in groups and considered:
  • How GCs support countries with cluster-like response mechanisms but not IASC activated clusters?
  • What are the resource implications of such support?
  • What criteria do GCs utilise for mobilising support? Is a standardised approach necessary?
  • Is the term "sector" used consistently?

The plenary discussion centred on the lack of clarity around the definition of what constitutes a sector vs a cluster with a number of Global Clusters stating that they support both structures without distinction. A key challenge that was highlighted was the resourcing of non-activated clusters. For some Global Clusters, the trigger to provide support to sectoral entities was similar to cluster activation, i.e. decision of CLA and agreement by the HCT but without IASC endorsement. A concern was raised as to negative connotations associated with the cluster approach in some contexts, with some misperceptions about the cluster approach automatically involving "parachuting people in to take over national capacity". Haiti was cited as an example where it is a struggle to support to national capacities and GC support is being facilitated, in some cases, against the desires of CLAs due to these misplaced perceptions.

Another element of the discussion involved questions on cluster activation itself and the suggestion by one participant that in major emergency contexts (that are not IASC Scale Ups) WASH, Health, Nutrition and Child Protection should be automatically triggered on a "no-regrets basis" with a scale down taking place if found that the needs in these sectors are covered. Similarly, participants raised questions on the coherence and application of guidance and use of terminology in instances where sectors and clusters exist in the same context at the same time.

Operationalizing Thematic Issues: Localization
Session outcome(s):
  ➢ Support to the dissemination and implementation of localization guidance among field clusters and ICCGs.
  ➢ Clarify terminology regarding key coordination roles (Co-Lead, Co-Chair, Co-Facilitator, etc).
  ➢ Consider approaches to increase and promote funding to LNAs.
  ➢ Consider approaches to identify LNAs with adequate capacity and support them in taking on more coordination roles.

The session was moderated by the Chair (Ms. Marina Skuric-Prodanovic) and the Global Education Cluster (Ms. Michelle Brown) and started with an overview of local and national actors' (LNA's) participation in

humanitarian coordination. Disparities between countries as well in fewer LNAs participating in coordination at the national level vs. subnational level were highlighted including the low participation of NNGOs on ICCGs across the board. The very low percentage (14%) of clusters with transition strategies was highlighted as representing a challenge to localization and promoting sustainability. A number of regional variations were highlighted:

- MENA ICCGs: Twice the percentage of NNGOs participation compared with the global average
- MENA leadership: Decrease in LNA participation in coordination compared to 2019
- West and Central Africa: More than twice the percentage of government participation compared with global average
- East and Southern Africa: Participation of LNAs in clusters is considerably higher than the global averages.

Participants (in breakout groups) considered the data presented and reflecting upon achievable localization commitments that could be made during 2022. The key points from the discussion included the following:

- There are real challenges to finding quantitative ways to measure the quality and progress of localization. There was agreement that measuring against indicators in the IASC guidance could be a first step (e.g. looking at promoting LNA leadership, as co-chairs or co-leads, in clusters at country level). There was general agreement that a more proactive approach was needed in reaching out to LNAs and asking them/supporting them in taking on cluster co-leadership functions.
- More clarity and guidance was needed on LNA participation in ICCGs.
- Limited funding and capacity constraints are barriers to LNAs' increased participation in coordination, especially in assuming PoLR responsibilities.
- Transition strategies are challenging to implement in operations were HCTs have limited coordination with national authorities due to contextual constraints.
- There is a need for greater clarity on what defines a "local" organization as well as on coordination leadership terminology

A number of Global Clusters outlined their commitments to localisation (and localisation indicators) in 2022 with some pointing out that they have or would develop specific localisation strategies. There was agreement that it would be useful to have a dedicated GCCG session to share good practices on localisation in different clusters.

Remarks on behalf of the ERC: Wafaa Saeed, Director of OCHA's Coordination Division in Geneva
Ms. Wafaa Saeed provided remarks on behalf of the ERC. She thanked the GCCG for drafting a thorough background note to the ERC on the strengthens and challenges of the cluster approach and for inviting him to the retreat. She underscored the importance of the cluster approach as driving the response and of the GCCG in representing the collective membership in global discussions. When assessing the humanitarian landscape, Ms. Saeed detailed several interlinked challenges resulting in increased humanitarian need, namely climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, famine, and increased conflict and displacement. She connected these challenges to the IASC's priorities, which among a number of issues, included humanitarian space, centrality of protection, humanitarian-development nexus, accountability to affected people, localization. Ms. Saeed briefed on the IASC's decision to transform the Results Groups to Taskforces and to formalize the IASC Deputies forum, which is charged with overseeing a review of coordination as per the recommendation from the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement. She noted that a Special Adviser on humanitarian space/access will be appointment to support the ERC and that a briefing with donors will take place on 30 November to discuss the systemic barriers to working with development actors. On the (dis)association of the GCCG and the HPC Steering Group, the IASC had decided more consultation was needed before a decision was taken. She closed by underscoring the importance of PSEA and the need to move away from "protecting reputations to protecting people".

Mr. William Chemaly (GPC) and Ms. Maria Agnese Giordano (GEC) provided some reflections, using the four main areas and key recommendation detailed in the background note to the ERC as a guide and noting that the GCCG has discussed the challenges and opportunities of the cluster approach for the past year through the 'Stepping Back to Looking Forward' initiative. They underscored the importance of the GCCG given its operational focus; its representation of a diversity of responders; and its broad reach. Global Clusters collectively coordinate more than $20 billion in aid with 16,500 cluster members (50% of these are national/local actors), in addition to working on preparedness and support operations where clusters have not been activated. They also underscored the importance of meaningful change, including a revamping of the cluster approach. They expressed an interest in continuing their dialogue with OCHA leadership, including the ERC, and stressed the

importance of the GCCG's inclusion in discussions in the review of coordination; and thanked OCHA for its commendable secretariat support to the GCCG.

Following these remarks, the floor was opened for questions. Participants spoke about the importance of the GCCG as an operational resource to the IASC; the frustration with the possible disassociation of the GCCG from the IASC; the need for the IASC to focus more on action (rather than policy/guidance) and to avoid creating more layers; the difficulties the GCCG faces when straddling the line between the Cluster Lead Agency (CLA) and cluster members and between global level processes and operational support; the importance of using a contextually appropriate approach to localization and to link it to accountability to affected people; various operational challenges, including in transition contexts like Iraq; the need for visibility on GBV and the inadequacy of response in remote locations; the need to hold donors accountable, particularly for implementing the Grand Bargain commitments and multi-year humanitarian planning and resource mobilization; the difficulties of humanitarian-development coordination and the possibility of creating greater nexus synergies in the preparedness stage; the importance of disability inclusion and holding the system accountable for implementation of the disability guidelines; and, the proliferation of alternate models of coordination at the operational level.

Ms. Wafaa Saeed thanked participants for their focus on operations and on affected people. She noted that it was important to look at localization at both national and subnational levels; with a range of actors, including governments and the private sector; and with the aim of ensuring equal partnership and not just capacity strengthening. She spoke about the challenges of scaling-up in Ethiopia due to internal rules and regulations; the importance of GBV as one of the HCT's four non-negotiables; the challenges of the role of donors, including the fact that humanitarian action is mostly funded by five donors; and the need to streamline the IASC. Finally, she thanked the GCCs for their contribution to humanitarian action and encouraged them to use their voice to contribute to global discussions, to continue their engagement with the ERC, including by providing him with regular background notes. She agreed that the GCCG should be included in any discussions on a review of coordination.

GCCG: Field Support to Clusters and ICCGs
Session outcome(s):
  ➢ Development of an online repository of mission reports
  ➢ Draft a "menu of options" describing how the GCCG can support clusters, ICCGs, and HCTs
  ➢ Develop an ICC training module, clarify role of ICCG
  ➢ Clarification of common coordination terms and definitions

This session was moderated by Mr. William Chemaly (GPC), Ms. Maria-Agnese Giordano (GEC), and Ms. Monica Ramos (WASH). After an overview of the GCCG's field support initiatives during 2021 and currently known requests for 2022 support, participants divided into three groups to discuss (a) modalities for improved GCCG field support (b) strengthened subnational coordination: and (c) and inter-cluster coordination. The key points from the discussion were as follows:

(a) Field support: Participants outlined the many ways that support was provided to country operations, both jointly and by individual GCs. They agreed that joint GC missions were critical and when GCs carried out individual missions, they should include a "common component" of concern to the GCCG. The GCCG secretariat was asked to create an online repository of all individual and joint missions reports; ensure mission briefings were integrated into regular meetings, as relevant; and create opportunities for the GCCG to influence other missions, such as those carried out by the P2P Support Project. Participants also agreed to draft a "menu of options" for operational support to clusters, ICCGs, and HCTs.

(b) Inter-cluster coordination: Participants discussed barriers and motivations for inter-cluster coordination, noting there was often an overemphasis on the role of chair and that greater responsibility needed to be placed on ICCG members, including identifying their accountabilities, priorities, and clients. Participants also noted that it was important to re-clarify the role and purpose of the ICCG; develop contextually relevant ToRs for each ICCG; clarify the chair's role in working on behalf of the collective; and develop a series of training modules for the ICCG chair, ICCG members and HC/HCT. Other points discussed were the alignment of all CCPMs with each other and with ICCG performance reviews; the provision of GCCG remote support to ICCG performance review discussions; the inclusion of NGO co-chairs in ICCG meetings; and support to HCTs/HCs in newly activated contexts.

(c) *Subnational coordination:* Participants discussed the challenges with ensuring sufficient coordination capacity at the subnational levels and debated the role the GCCG could play. Noting the direct link between subnational coordination and localization, the discussion focused on how to support non-CLA subnational focal points; clarification of terminology/accountability for subnational roles; area-based coordination; and subnational level access negotiations. On the latter, the GCCG secretariat offered to invite OCHA's access team to an upcoming GCCG meeting.

Coordination Challenges and Opportunities 3: Working with Development Actors
Session outcome(s):
  ➢ Engage in a technical level briefing with UN DCO
  ➢ Development of good practice, guidance/webinar for country-level clusters on development coordination actors and structures.

This session was facilitated by Mr. Dher Hayo (CCCM) with support from Ms, Randa Hassan (GCCG-S) and focused on the sharing of opportunities and challenges of the clusters' engagement with development partners and ways that the GCCG can support this work. Participants divided into three groups to further discuss. The key points of the discussion were as follows:

- Engagement with development actors depends on the nature, size and scale of the crisis and also on the technical area of the cluster. Responders in a sudden onset emergency likely have less engagement with development actors. Clusters like health are more advanced in their engagement with development partners than other clusters.
- Even if collective outcomes are developed, humanitarian and development actors work independently in different target areas. They also operate using vastly different time scales and planning/funding cycles. There is a lack of accountability for development funding, which has been publicly committed and withdrawn in some chronic humanitarian operations. All of these factors impede collaboration.
- Cash programming may reduce the divide and make humanitarian and development partners more interlinked.
- National actors are more development focused.
- Clusters need to link up with ministry plans, where this is possible.
- Preparedness is an area of potential greater humanitarian-development collaboration.
- Humanitarian responders continue to have a very limited understanding of development coordination. The GCCG would benefit from a technical level briefing with UN DCO; guidance, a mapping of good practice, or a webinar should also be developed for country level clusters. To note, the protection cluster is developing guidance on the nexus for country-level clusters, based on its work in Somalia and Ethiopia.
- Most UN agencies are dual-mandated, but Country Representatives lack humanitarian experience to help make the connections.
- Peace actors are usually excluded from the conversation, but they operate in the same space and usually have access to significant amounts of development funding.
- Closer collaboration with development actors is critical for effective cluster transition and deactivation.

2022 GCCG Workplan and Priorities and Support from GCCG
Session outcome(s): Please refer to 2022 workplan, to be discussed at the GCCG meeting on 15 December 2021.

The aim of this final session, facilitated by the GCCG Chair, was to develop the GCCGs workplan for 2022 by identifying activities considered to be of highest priority to be undertaken during 2022. In this session. GCs placed stickers next to activities/ suggested actions that had been proposed in session discussions during the course of the retreat (see below). The top three priority countries identified for GCCG field support were: Afghanistan, South Sudan, and Madagascar. In addition, the GCCs discussed the establishment of a GCCG taskforce on capacity-building (GNC to develop the ToRs); peer exchange among cluster help desks; and the need to elect a new liaison to the JIAF to replace current GC representatives (election pending).

Activities that received 5 or more stickers were as follows (highest number of stickers listed first):
- Non-activated contexts: Define support to operations without activated clusters.
- Localization: Hold a dedicated session on localization to determine a way forward; consider inter-cluster peer exchange on good practice.

- Donors: Advocate with donors/GHD through meetings (s) and written material, using the coordination mapping data and the SBLF letter to the ERC. Brief donors on individual or joint missions as appropriate.
- Operational support: Draft and disseminate a one-page menu of operational support options for HCs, HCTs, ICCGs and clusters.
- Area-based coordination: Hold a dedicated session to define a way forward. CCCM cluster to develop a note.
- Operational support: Provide remote support to all newly activated cluster operations and to any ad hoc requests.
- Tools/guidance: Establish a repository of cluster tools and resources.
- EDG: Reinforce engagement with EDG on operational issues.

The meeting concluded with GCCs expressing the importance of having had an in-person retreat after a long period of virtual meetings due to COVID-19 measures, as well as appreciation for the collegiality within the Group and the positive communication during the meeting.

Annex: List of participants:

Cluster / AOR	Name	Organisation	Title
CCCM (Conflict)	Dher Hayo	UNHCR	Global Cluster Coordinator
CCCM (Natural Disasters)	Wan Sophonpanich	IOM	Global Cluster Coordinator
Child Protection	Ron Pouwels	UNICEF	Global AoR Coordinator
Child Protection	Joyce Mutiso	UNICEF	Deputy AoR Coordinator
Education	Maria Agnese Giordano	UNICEF	Global Cluster Coordinator
Education	Michelle Brown	Save the Children	Global Cluster Coordinator
ETC	Brent Carbno	WFP	Global Cluster Coordinator
Food Security	Abdul Majid	WFP/FAO	Global Cluster Coordinator
Food Security	Naouar Labidi	WFP/FAO	Deputy Cluster Coordinator
GBV	Jennifer Chase	UNFPA	Global AOR Coordinator
GBV	Astrid Haaland	UNFPA	Deputy Coordinator/ REGA Manager
Health	Linda Doull	WHO	Global Cluster Coordinator
Housing, Land and Property	Jim Robinson	NRC	Global AoR Coordinator
Logistics	Athalie Mayo	WFP	Global Cluster Coordinator
Mine Action	Bruno Donat	UNMAS	Global Coordinator of the MA AoR
Mine Action	Christelle Loupforest	UNMAS	Deputy Global Coordinator, Mine Action AoR
Nutrition	Stefano Fedele	UNICEF	Global Cluster Coordinator

Nutrition	Anna Ziolkovska	UNICEF	Deputy Global Cluster Coordinator
Protection	William Chemaly	UNHCR	Global Cluster Coordinator
Protection	Celine Maret	UNHCR	Global Protection Cluster
Shelter (Conflict)	Brett Moore	UNHCR	Global Cluster Coordinator
Shelter (Conflict)	Sahdia Khan	UNHCR	Deputy Cluster Coordinator
Shelter (Natural Disaster)	Ela Serdaroglu	IFRC	Global Cluster Coordinator
Shelter (Natural Disaster)	Pablo Medina	IFRC	Deputy Cluster Coordinator
WASH	Monica Ramos	UNICEF	Global Cluster Coordinator
GCCG Chair	Marina Skuric-Prodanovic	OCHA	
GCCG secretariat	Randa Hassan	OCHA	
GCCG secretariat	Annarita Marcantonio	OCHA	
GCCG secretariat	Janet Puhalovic	OCHA	
GCCG secretariat	Mate Bagossy	OCHA	

Guest speakers:

OCHA	Wafaa Saeed	OCHA	Director, OCHA Coordination Division